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Volume 88 Issue 5

SSMU Dental Plan Called a "Facade"

LEADING DENTIST QUESTIONS PLAN'S LEGITIMACY

BY TERRY PAROLIN

The McGill Student Health Plan is a money-making scam operated by a private operation, according to a prominent dentist.

But the plan's administrators deny the accusations and claim that they are part of a smear campaign by the Québec Dental Association—a lobby group for dental professionals in Quebec, leaving McGill students squarely in the middle.

The SSMU Health and Dental Plan, by name, implies that it is administered by the elected officials of SSMU. It is actually administered by the Québec Student

Health Alliance (ASEQ). ASEQ is a brokerage house which sells the insurance plan underwritten by Liberty Health, one of the largest insurance companies in North America.

Students who subscribe to the current Dental Plan are eligible for 100% reimbursement if they use one of the 99 dentists on ASEQ's network.

Dr. Barry Dolman, past-president of the Canadian Dental Association and a past member of the Québec Dental Surgeons' Association (QDSA) Board of Governors, called the network a "facade." He suggested that for the most part,

"the majority of the dentists listed have struggling practices and are looking for more patients."

Lev Bukman, executive director of ASEQ, quickly opposed the accusation. He contended that the Québec Dental Surgeons' Association directed a campaign to dentists to effectively turn them against the ASEQ. According to him, "[the QDSA] have spent substantial amounts to try to stop us."

Bukman responded to Dolman's concern by calling it "a ridiculous and slanderous claim. [The] ASEQ does not recruit dentists, but it grows by word of mouth in the dental community and stu-

dents asking their dentists to join."

He also added that last year, in a meeting, Dr. Dolman remarked to Bukman that; "students are all from wealthy families and don't need discounts" and accused the plan of hurting dentists.

Dolman also criticized the plan for containing a poorly constructed network that could easily fail. Last year the number of network dentists was 10. This year, 99 are taking part; with 3 in Toronto and even 1 in Vancouver.

Dolman's concern is that the number of students served by the plan far exceed the number of dentists physically able to serve them

and their own roster of patients, particularly after you eliminate dentists located in Magog and Laval.

There are the allegations that network dentists may perform unnecessary procedures to recover the additional 30% they discount from Canada's dental fee guide. If a student visits a network dentist, he/she can claim 100% of the cost, while if a he/she sees a non-network dentist, only 70% can be claimed. The 30% difference is not an extra payout from the insurance company, but rather, a discount offered by the network dentists.

(continued on page 9)

Bank Merger Looms

STUDENTS SHAFTED IN FINANCIAL SECTOR SHUFFLE

BY JON BRICKER

Looming threats of megabank mergers have many Canadians concerned that students across the country are about to receive yet another damaging blow to their already bleak financial situations.

Last Tuesday, a government Task Force released its report suggesting preliminary approval of the two proposed mergers between the Royal Bank of Canada and the Bank of Montreal, and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and the Toronto Dominion Bank. The two resulting institutions would control 70% of Canada's banking assets. This has critics fearing that these impending consolidations will drive a nail in to the coffin of Canadian students.

"It doesn't seem like the Liberal Party is running to the defense of students," said Libby Davies, New Democratic Party (NDP) Critic for Youth, Post-Secondary Education and Social Programs, and member of parliament for Vancouver East. "Students are being put at the mercy of the banks."

The NDP and the Council of Ca-

nadians have led opposition to the proposed mergers so far, contending that, among other things, the mergers would lead to lessened competition and even higher interest rates in the student loan industry. Ultimately this gives banks the powers to decide who can and cannot study at the post-secondary level.

A recent Council of Canadians report claims that students have a hard time getting loans already.

"The government can approve you for a loan but the bank can still turn you down if they aren't happy with your credit history. If the mergers go through, there will be less competition in the banking industry and even fewer choices for students," the report said. "The banks have a monopoly on student loans. No other financial institutions offer these loans."

Meanwhile, the federal Liberals who commissioned the Task Force are saying that they have made no decisions on the mergers. But finance minister Paul Martin has defended the Task Force's Report.

"The Report contains a number of important recommendations with respect to strengthening the

protection of consumers, and ensuring a consumer-responsive financial services sector," he said. "The essence of the Report is very clear: that the public interest and consumer interest must provide the basis for any decision on the future of the financial services sector."

But if the public interest includes student interests, some critics say the Report has been unresponsive.

"The reports we've seen don't pay any particular attention to students," said Davies. She added that she has seen no indication that future efforts to seek public opinion will involve students.

As cause for her concern, Davies cites the recent cuts of \$1.5-billion from federal transfer payments to provinces for post-secondary education, rising student debt, and the turnover of loan programs to the banks.

In response to this, Scott Reid spokesperson for Paul Martin's office, said "The transfers were diminished... We had to get the deficit under control."

But Davies says a decision to

allow the mergers would just mean the continuance of a governmental trend of disregard for students in post-secondary education. "Students often get screwed around by the banks. They're being treated as commercial loans, not social investments," she said.

Changes including the shut down of several local government loan offices have left students struggling to understand their rights and options in obtaining loans, Davies said. "Allowing banks to control social programs is wrong. Now we're allowing them to make money off that."

Martin, who is responsible for the ultimate decision on the mergers, referred Tuesday's report to a House Standing Committee who will soon kick off nationwide hearings to seek public input into the merger proposals.

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A Just Coffee promote fair trade as an alternative to conventional trade focusing on the issues of equity and long term community development. Monday September 21 at 6:30 in the QPIRG office.

Blood Sisters is an ever growing coalition generating more and more creative projects to raise awareness surrounding menstrual politics. Drop in time at the McGill Women's Union (423 of Shatner) Wednesdays from 1:30 to 2:30. Will be showing video at Concordia on Thursday Oct. 1, call 398-7432 for more info.

Campus and Community Environmental Action implements recycling, energy efficiency and other responsible resource use on campus. Teams work in residences, organizing composting, writing newspaper columns, and lots of other projects. Tuesday September 22 at 6:00 in the QPIRG office.

This fall, **Corporate Watch McGill** will focus on opposing the threat posed to our academic freedom by corporate investment at McGill, by means of research, education and direct action. Monday September 21 at 5:00 in the QPIRG office.

Criminal Injustice aims to highlighting the nature of the criminal "justice" system and to exploring alternatives to dealing with anti-social behaviour. Call for 398-7432 for info.

By hosting speakers, educational workshops, retreats and educational movie presentations, **EarthSave** helps people to make a healthy choice about their eating habits. Every Monday at 6:30 in the QPIRG office.

girlSpace is an after school program for young women aged 12-17, focusing on self esteem and leadership issues. Women volunteers needed to facilitate and develop workshops on specific issues. Men are welcome to start an equivalent group for boys. Monday September 21 at 5:00 in the QPIRG office

Queer Straight Alliance's objective is to encourage positivity and acceptance of people of all different sexual orientations and identities, and further, to make this positivity visible throughout McGill campus. Monday September 21 at 6:30 at the Newman Centre (3484 Peel).

Student Activist Newspaper is a national publication that includes news and features on activism of all kinds, from teachers strikes, to tuition demos to First Nations resistance. Call 398-7432 for more info.

Where does all this stuff happen? In our office, 3647 University Street, 3rd Floor. Find out more about our events and activities by visiting our website at <http://ssmu.mcgill.ca/qpirg> or call us at 398-7432. We're generally open from 10-5:30, Monday to Friday.

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Other upcoming events:

QPIRG Board of Directors meeting Tuesday September 22 at 6:30 in the QPIRG office. Come to find out how QPIRG is managed.

QPIRG Volunteer Training Retreat October 2-4. Come join us in the country for a fun, relaxing weekend filled with workshops and activities. Cost \$25 including food and transportation.

Our **Community Action in the City Bus Tour** has been rescheduled for Friday September 25 from 1-4pm.

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And if you still think that QPIRG has nothing to offer for you, then you're welcome to get your **refund** of your QPIRG fee of \$3. Come to the office, any weekday in October (except Thanksgiving day) from 11 to 4.

Against the Grain

Looks Like the Liberals Are Bailing Out of Spending Promises

If the surplus is going to be less than predicted, why are we spending more on debt repayment and tax reduction and less on new spending? This is the question I pose to the Liberal government, and to the citizens of Canada.

Looking back to the election promises made by the Liberals in 1997 I remember feeling nauseous, anticipating the imminent victory of a party based on deficit reduction, and only deficit reduction.

But low and behold the Liberals have exceeded even my expectations. Jean Chrétien's recent betrayal of yet another election promise begs one to ask whether the prime minister and his friends have considered, even for a moment, the idea of representative democracy. We elect the government on a platform. They deliver that platform.

The betrayal I'm speaking of was delivered in Chrétien's economic speech last weekend. Debt repayment will be over the \$3-billion projected in the last budget. This comes at the same time that Liberals are warning us the surplus will not be as much as they estimated previously.

In the final analysis, according

BY
JEFF
WEBBER

to Edward Greenspon of *The Globe And Mail* this results in, "at least \$5-billion in tax and debt relief versus perhaps \$1-billion new spending next year." This 5:1 ratio flies in the face of their 1:1 promise.

How this contradicts the Liberals' promises is basic. They promised that any new surpluses would be spent 50% on debt repayments and 50% on new spending.

I see this as key. They sold the public with their deficit hysteria, and now that the public has endured their onslaught of social spending cut backs - thoroughly eroded transfer payments - it is time for the Liberals to implement what in itself was a meager promise.

If the deficit was all we were supposed to be concerned about in the past, are we now supposed to jump on another hysterical, unfounded bandwagon called 'debt reduction', and 'tax cuts', or as I like to think of it 'a road back to the 1980s via Thatcher and Reagan'.

The Liberals are taking advantage of the ugly reality that exists in Canadian politics today. A three part divide has left the Liberals in a virtually undisputed position: a divided Right between the Reform party and the Conservatives; Québec's support for the Bloc Québécois; and the New Democratic Party's (NDP) moderate Left stance moving progressively Right.

The only salient aspect of our national politics as it stands, is the Liberals' awareness of their seat at the top. They are not even bothering with their usual rhetoric as they dismantle the promises they made in 1997.

Chrétien has now pledged that the \$5.7-billion surplus of the first three months of the year will go only to debt repayment. How does Chrétien plan to defend this move? It is necessary that we take the government to task. Representative

democracy does not work when the prime minister of a country arbitrarily enacts policy which irrefutably ignores previous promises to the voters.

Lets take a look at what exactly these new policies mean in terms of long term social safety net erosion. On top of the new move to debt repayment, what is particularly disturbing is the Liberals' obsession with tax cuts.

Tax cuts are widely acknowledged, even among the Liberals themselves, as the most expensive form of spending, simply by virtue of the number of people to which they apply.

It would cost us far less to dig from the public surplus and put into our eroding social sectors - health care, education, and welfare - and make a real impact, than it is going to cost to make a very minimal tax cut.

In addition to this, tax reductions do not benefit the poorest sectors of our society. We can thus add tax cuts to the Liberals' list of initiatives to lure multinational investors into this country. They argue it is to make our environment hospitable to investors.

More than hospitable, we're providing a haven. I would argue that the poor deserve greater comfort from our government policies than do multinational corporations which have no long term stakes in the enrichment of our country.

Further, tax cuts are the most permanent action a government can take, which consequently spells out the bleakest picture for the future of our social security net.

A spending increase in the vital social service areas I mentioned above can easily be abandoned in times of necessary - or even just supposedly necessary - fiscal austerity. We have obviously witnessed the ease with which our social programs can be attacked in the last few years of the Chrétien government. Once a tax cut is in place, it is extremely difficult to get the public behind an increase in taxes when more money for the public purse is needed.

Even more important than the present hysteria of debt reduction and tax cuts, however, is the fact that our federal government does not feel the need to consult us when it drastically deviates from its platform. The government has no mandate to do what they are presently doing. I for one reject their arrogant disrespect for our interests.

Joe Clark's Attitude: Cynical Towards Students

Last Wednesday, former Prime Minister and current candidate for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party, Joe Clark, addressed a group of McGill students. In the question period that followed his remarks, a student asked his opinion about the Ontario government's decision to deregulate certain tuition fees. Clark claimed that he was "not familiar with the situation."

On the surface, Clark's professed ignorance is all but plausible. As a leadership candidate of a major political party, it is his business to be familiar with issues affecting all Canadians, students included. According to a campaign document entitled *Joe Clark: A Profile*, his daughter "is a student at the University of Toronto." The tuition deregulation issue was widely reported in the mainstream media. The August 26th edition of the *Toronto Star* reported that, "the province, in May, removed the cap on what universities can charge in engineering, medicine, dentistry and law." Similar reports appeared in other major newspapers including the *Globe and Mail* and the *Ottawa Citizen*. Are we to believe the former Prime Minister is ignorant of the Harris government's decision to deregulate tuition fees?

It is more plausible that Joe Clark just didn't want to talk about the issue, which should hardly be surprising. In an address to students at l'Université de Montréal, Clark offered that, "most 'social' matters are entirely, or primarily, within provincial jurisdiction." Further, he said that, "needs and conditions vary so greatly from place to place. Obviously, this argues for reinforcing provincial and even local authority and flexibility in social programs." It is relatively easy to deduce from this information that Clark sees no role for the federal government in preventing provincial governments from deregulating tuition fees. Doing so would be inconsistent with reinforcing provincial authority in social matters.

The same campaign document describes the former Prime

Minister as, "one of the first fiscal conservatives of the modern era." A Clark campaign pamphlet mentioned his, "targeted program to bring down Canada's debt, and introduce tax changes designed to encourage job creation and economic growth," yet makes no mention of reinvestment or new spending. Do these sound like the words of someone preparing to invest in education?

Maybe Joe Clark has so little respect for students that in order to avoid saying something unpopular he feigns ignorance and assumes no one will notice. Or maybe he cares so little about the issues facing students that he really knows nothing about well-publicized and important developments that could dramatically affect students including his own daughter. Is this really the kind of leadership that will, "reach out to Canadians from coast to coast and earn back their support?"

In either case, Joe Clark acted in a callous manner. He should have known about the deregulation. And he should have been forthright enough to admit that as Prime Minister he would do nothing to stop it. It is that kind of commitment and honesty that might restore faith in Joe Clark's Party.



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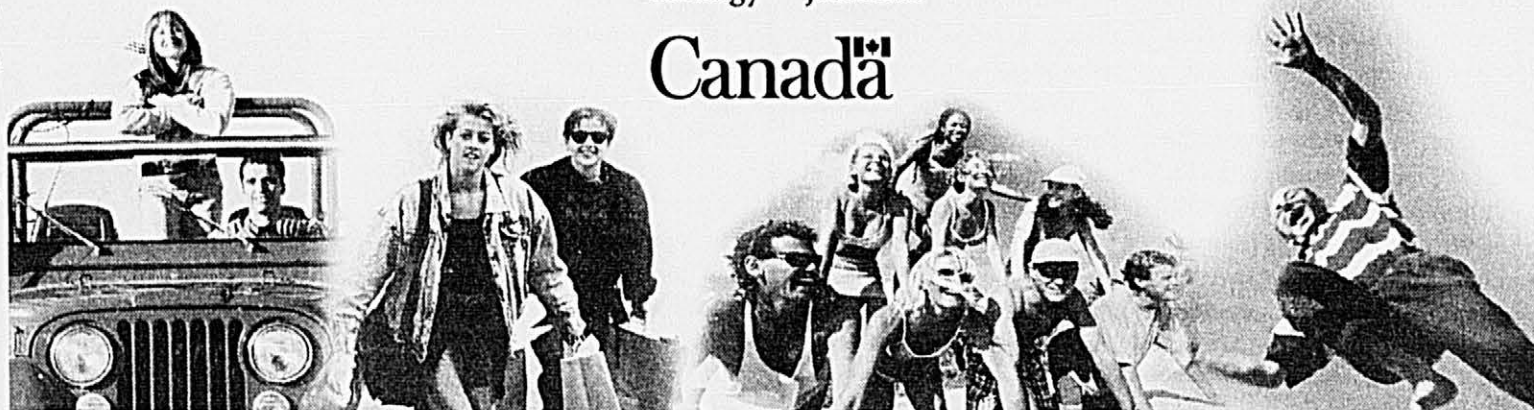
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Voices from Russia

Personal accounts on the ruble's fall

BY DASHA MERKUSHEVA

"How is the ruble doing?" and "Has Russia's economy come to its complete and inevitable end?" are but a few versions of the same question I encountered upon my arrival from Moscow. I began, initially, giving largely optimistic answers until....

Deprived of any news from home for a week or so, I decided to watch the News on TV. A terrifying report on Russia showed the people waiting in endless lines, and a political system in chaos.

I realize from past experience that the information transmitted via TV, radio and papers is often inaccurate. Frequently mainstream media's financial and political interests lead to sensationalism and distortion of events and situations. I decided not to believe what I saw and turned to more reliable sources: people living in Russia.

However, their reality is in fact as bad as the news portrays it. The notorious line ups to buy staple foods and withdraw money from banks, the appointment of a new conservative Prime-Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, and the scare of turmoil this coming October (as promised by Russian trade leaders) are all very real.

Contemplating the causes

Russian journalists, political analysts and citizens speculate on different reasons for the emergence of this last crisis.

Some believe that the situation is due to the actions of unscrupulous Russian business people and politicians in their attempt to make money of everything. This seems plausible when one analyzes the rate changes of the ruble in one month. Demonstrating gymnastic prowess, the ruble fell to 20 rubles for one US dollar, climbed back to six rubles (the rate before the crisis) and now is in free fall once again.

Many think the crisis denotes the end of the political career of president Boris Yeltsin, who has grown politically weak and physi-

cally ill. Yeltsin, now running the country from his rural residence outside of Moscow, demonstrates an inability to control the situation.

Trying to survive

But the reasons for the crisis are of less importance now. Everyone is consumed in finding a

more and more people might join them

"We are all like Lenin: they don't feed us, and yet don't bury," is a popular aphorism of Ilya Serenko and many other Russian students.

At the height of the crisis the stores bellied out, as citizens rushed to buy whatever they could in anticipation of ever-



PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA, BORIS YELTSIN

GRAPHIC SHAMELESSLY STOLEN FROM CNN WEBSITE FILES.

means of survival, literally. The prices have risen two to four times yet salaries have remained the same. Furthermore, millions of Russians are yet to receive their severely devalued wages. Those most hurt are the ones depending on the government budget: public sector workers and pensioners are awaiting their 36 billion rubles.

The government promises to repay the debt by printing more money, thus sending the country into a dangerous, possibly boundless, cycle of rising inflation.

Mikhail Skmakov, leader of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions, promises that October will bring many demonstrations and uprisings from the devastated Russian people; all leading to the resignation of Yeltsin.

The slogans will probably resemble the ones appearing at the recent marches: "Yeltsin-the enemy of the people," "Everything is lies" and "Down with this regime."

The protests, usually organized by labour unions and the Bolshevik party, show the wishes of a small number (so far) who advocate forceful opposition. They are a common occurrence in Moscow, but if the situation does not improve,

rising inflation. Now, people buy sugar, salt, flour and other basic provisions in large amounts expecting tougher days.

The crisis has hit most sectors of society. The middle-class find their money worth nothing, and what remains in the banks they are trying to withdraw, standing for many hours in lines. On the other hand, the black market is flourishing by exchanging rubles and dollars when the banks run out of currency.

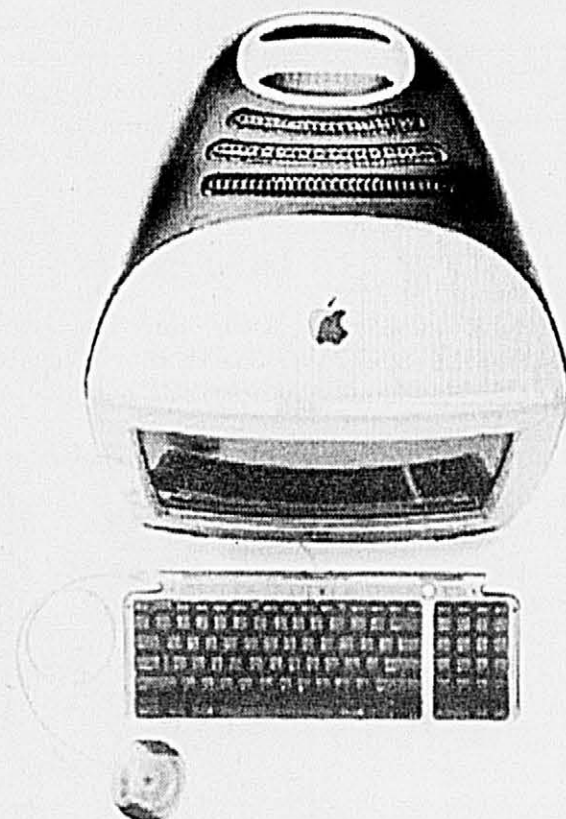
The poor find themselves in an even more critical situation. Reports say that thieves are stealing food from household refrigerators, adding a new touch to the usual violations.

The majority of small businesses are ruined. Having taken government loans, they are now unable to return the debt. Many employees are left without jobs and may follow the trade unions appeal to an all-Russian strike in October.

Despite this dark account of the Russian situation, many people are tired of the "crisis-talks."

"We are all fed up with discussing the crisis," said Vasilii Kuznetsov, a student at Moscow State University. "It's time to move on already."

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Yesterday's Man Trying to Make it Today

JOE CLARK TALKS TO THE

BY JASON CHOW

ON EDUCATION

Daily - During the previous election campaign, there was talk about national standards. At the same time, Harris is deregulating tuition fees in his province. [For example, University of] Western [Ontario's] Medical School tuition fees have risen 204%, Law School 127%, U of T's Law School more than 100%. On the federal level....

Clark - I don't know if the federal government can do much about that. I think the federal government may be able to deal with the questions of de facto inter-provincial barriers to the movement of people closer to things. But I think that the fee structures are directly the responsibility of the provinces. The federal government may be able to help in that field by making money available, but I am not in favour of targeted money. I am in support of the idea of block granting because I think that it does give authority — more authority — to where the constitution puts it. It may be that if we are able to establish some type of leadership in establishing standards for education — for the content of education — that may lead to [providing] the auspices, a form or a place where there can be a discussion of the impact on students of fee structure deregulation....

Daily - That would mean targeted spending....

Clark - No, because it would only be discussion. I mean my short answer to your question is that is not a field where the federal government can act. That is my short answer. But the whole purpose in trying to look at this question of standards and of federal leadership is that it says that people need not be captive of their jurisdictions. It is possible it could cause people to use their jurisdictions as a basis upon which they can build rather than a bunker in which they try to hide. And I want to be clear again: I would want to focus that on

what we can accomplish, on the content of what is being taught. I think the internal arrangements of fee structures are matters that will forever remain provincial matters....

ON THE FUTURE OF THE PARTY

Daily - How do you interpret the Sherbrooke by-election? Some critics, some pundits here in

went on to win 20 seats across the country and nearly won another 20 in Québec. I wish it would have been otherwise, but it wasn't. What really is surprising about Sherbrooke is that Mr. Chrétien knew that we were unprepared, which is why he called it. I was surprised he was so unprepared. I would just assume he would be ready to win that by-election.

Daily - The emphasis on personality, reputation, and your experience as a statesman you've been playing up from the start. I've heard

real, when there is such a sense of manipulation, I think the fact that, for a large part of the Canadian electorate, I am a known commodity (and seen to be a favourable known commodity), is a very significant asset to this party, particularly in the time when the question whether you can trust any institutions. So, I make no apologies about that and I think it is a strong asset.

On policy, Hugh [Segal] decided to call himself the policy candidate and in late (word couldn't be deciphered)... and he put out a bunch of statements — some of which are stronger than others — but indicated an interest in policy. I keep getting reported in not making any policy statements despite the quite de-

of them, for example, would be [the fact that] we have one of the most successful social systems in the world developed in a particular point in time.... How do Canadians, in our tradition of being so effective in the development of the social safety net apply that to these modern circumstances. I think we should have people from Chicoutimi (Québec) and Seven Persons (Alberta) sitting down together to talk about that because I think they would find their approaches rather similar. I personally, as a former Foreign Minister, would like us to take a look at why it was that Canada was so successful internationally, why we were so respected: how we can hold and apply that asset in a world that needs those kind of re-

sources. I think we should take a look at educational standards: what do we do, given jurisdictions, to ensure we are more effective in achieving our educational standards.



Québec have written the Conservatives off, as irrelevant, as a dead party. How do you interpret Sherbrooke?

Clark - We were not prepared; in part, that's our fault. But Mr. Chrétien knew we were in the middle of a leadership campaign, so we were not in a position to win it. By the time the federal election comes around, there are ridings which we have a good shot at winning and I think there are 30 or 40 in Québec too, and we'll be strongly prepared. I think the real question is... there will be the kind of support where a respected leader from outside Québec as there has been respect for a leader from inside Québec. I think that the answer to that, in my case, is yes. I think that in the time between the choice of the leader and the calling of the next election, I'll be able to build on the assets that I have to make this a stronger federal party in the Commons. I don't think that Sherbrooke will be long lost. Remember the Brome-Missisquoi by-election three or four years ago: Charest campaigned three or four days himself and we came out of it with 3% of the vote. We

some criticizing that you're simply banking on your experience and your reputation as opposed to getting involved in a policy debate. Is experience and reputation that relevant these days of the recent ascent of Tony Blair in the UK, Bill Clinton's popularity in the U.S...?

Clark - I think so, because it is a particular kind of experience - I'll get to the policy question later - I offer two things. One is, I have worked in all aspects of the Canadian system, and if I do say so, relatively successfully. The Charlottetown Accord was rejected, nonetheless, an agreement never before reached. My period as Foreign Minister is widely regarded as a successful period. There is that.

But what I think is more important is that I came out of 25 years of public life as someone who is trusted and respected in the community. People had a chance to see me and come to some judgment about me. And that, in an age where so little is



JOE CLARK: MAN WITH A MISSION

tailed positions I have taken on debt reduction, on productivity, on northern development, on federalism, and a range of other questions. So I guess what I'm doing is pleading not guilty to the policy charge but I'm suspecting it's something that won't hang around for some time.

ON CANADIAN CHARACTER

Daily - You mentioned upstairs [in the address to McGill students] about the essential Canadian values. You said you believed that there is a consensus on Canadian values and beliefs. What are they?

Clark - I tend to think of this in terms of goals and I would try to call a new conference on Canadian goals. What I want to do is focus on Canadian goals. One

I am toying with an idea, (this may anticipate a speech next week): we have always talked about ourselves as a caring community and it is a characteristic of Canada. We have shown more care for our neighbors than others. We are a real community. The U.S. is more than less egalitarian. But we're also a culture that is quite accomplished. Some people would like to describe that as an entrepreneurial capacity, which in part, it is. That word seems to be almost too limiting in that it suggests too narrow a business focus. In fact, our entrepreneurs have been in all sorts of fields, charities, volunteering agencies, and things like that. But there is an accomplishment culture and people come together to do things. It is empowering. It gives people the sense that they can do things together.

Linda McQuaig on the Cult of Impotence

BY JEFF WEBBER

One of the reasons I am interested in this is that we need a much stronger sense in Canadian myth. And I use myth in the constructive sense, not something misleading. And obviously, we can't import someone else's myth. They won't fit here....

Daily - But how do you define it? The Americans have the American dream, the American western frontier....

Clark - Well, the frontier and the west — there is something of that in ours. Their [myth is about] a transforming civilization. And that is what they think they are. They think they are sort of the light upon the hill, guiding other nations....

Part of our dilemma is our qualities are so much more quiet qualities. Our military mission is to achieve peace and keep it. [The American] military mission is to win wars. There is a big difference.

So where do you find [the Canadian myth]? You find it in the co-ops, in the caisses populaires. You find in the strength of voluntary activities in cities across the country. I think you find it in our communities. The question is, how do we define it? How do we give it a sense that we can talk about it more articulately than I am? How do we get it down to three or four lines so that people can put in their minds and say, "Yeah, those are the distinguishing characteristics of the country...."

Daily - But that is a 130 year-old problem....

Clark - Yes, it is. One of the reasons we have not been able to solve this problem in our 130 years is that we've been so far apart. For a long time, to be far apart physically meant we didn't realize we had a problem. People defined Canada in Medicine Hat [Alberta] differently than they did in Sherbrooke. And we just sort of went along under the British flag. We can't do that anymore, but we have now with so much mobility.

I don't know where [the students that I addressed] came from today, but I bet they came from a much wider net than a group at McGill 30 years ago would come from. And we have all these meth-

Last Tuesday Linda McQuaig began her talk at Concordia University with an attack ranging from our choices in the global economy to the current federal Liberals' contribution to deficit hysteria, all the focus of her new book *The Cult of Impotence*.

McQuaig's key objective was to instill in the audience the feeling that, despite popular belief, regular people can change the present right wing agenda that fuels globalization. "Canadians have come to accept the notion that we have to go in this direction because we have no other alternative," she said. "My argument is that the government [is] not nearly so powerless as it [implies]."

With the introduction of nebulous concepts such as "globalization" by financial market representatives, and the federal government inducing 'deficit hysteria' among the masses, McQuaig argues that current political and financial elites want to reinforce the idea that we have no choice in the present global political environment.

ods of modern communication. We must be able to find some way in which people can cherish dreams.

We might have to do some physical things. We might have to make travel easier....Most leaders of small countries have experience across their small countries. Most leaders of our country, whether it is in the arts, in the media, or in politics — we simply do not have much contact with the whole country. Surely, in this age, we can find some way to do that.

So, the fact the problem has been around a long time doesn't negate the possibility that we may have the technologies to help solve it.

Daily - Thank you.

Clark - You look a bit more skeptical about that than I am. I can see it on your face.



LINDA MCQUAIG

"We're told that governments are powerless to put in place the kind of politics we want. Instead, we have to do what the financial markets want. The problem with this is that it limits the government's ability to put policies in place that we want," she stated.

Deficit Hysteria

The supposed lack of choices that the government presents to the public, "was once blamed on the deficit," according to McQuaig. "Now there is no deficit and we're still being told this."

It was in finance minister Paul Martin's 1995 federal budget speech that McQuaig asserts the significant problems of poverty and monolithic, right wing policy decisions really began to make themselves felt.

She noted that "in the 1995 budget Paul Martin did his really big spending cuts. This was the time of what I would call 'deficit hysteria'."

To escape the criticisms of naiveté lofted at many left wing commentators, McQuaig qualifies her argument that governments do have more power than they imply.

"I'm not suggesting by this that there are no constraints on government in the global economy. The constraints are the financial markets," she said.

But to reinforce why this is so, McQuaig continued, "The reason the financial markets are so powerful today is because the governments gave that power over to them."

Globalization

In her analysis of globalization, McQuaig made both convincing arguments against the misuse and abuse of the term 'globalization' by elites in both the government and financial sectors, and less convincing

assertions that globalization has existed since the 1920s.

There is this "magic concept of globalization.... Globalization changes everything we're told. Governments can't control flow of capital, so financial elites have the power. But if you break this argument down it falls apart," she said. The argument is flawed, because the same technology that is used by the financial elites to speed up capital flow can be used against them.

One such tool that we could use, according to McQuaig, could be a small tax on speculative capital every time it moves around from country to country. The tax would be too small to effect individual investors, but would act as a deterrent to speculative capital suddenly abandoning a country or region, as happened in the Asian economic collapse. In addition, the small tax would generate \$150-billion world wide, on an annual basis.

The weaker argument

Where McQuaig's argument on globalization falters, however, is in her comparison of the present global trade environment to that of the late nineteenth century.

"But we've been able to move money almost simultaneously from London to New York since the 1860s," she said.

McQuaig did concede that the means of instantaneous capital flow from country to country have improved with the advance of computers, but she still placed far

too much emphasis on the similarities of pre-1920 global politics and global politics in the 1990s. Quite obviously the advance of computer technology has had a greater impact than McQuaig implied.

However, she made a very strong point when she commented on the potentially reverse consequences of computer technology.

"There's a flipside to the computer, and that is that governments can track all capital flows and even control them. Computers are great at recording data," McQuaig said. Basically, the only obstacle remaining in the way of using computer technology against the financial elites, according to McQuaig, is the willingness of governments to do so.

Bank Merger

The Bank of Montreal and the Royal Bank too have adopted the scare tactic of globalization in their proposition for merging. McQuaig argued that what they say is necessary in the present onset of globalization, is really just the banks' attempt to advance their own interests.

What we hear is that bank mergers "are necessary in the global economy," McQuaig said. "In fact, the real purpose of bank mergers is good old fashion reduction of competition right here in Canada."

McQuaig pointed out that the reduction of competition is clearly a benefit for the banks alone, not Canadian consumers.

The tragic consequences of a bank merger are not what Canadians want, but have accepted because there appears to be no choice, argued McQuaig.

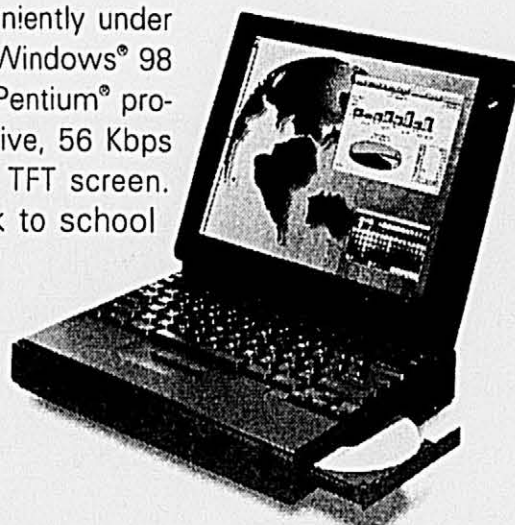
"There could be a loss of 40,000 jobs in the banking sector. This would be and is very unpopular in the public so the banks invoke this notion of globalization," she said.

It is the notion of globalization that has seemed to transcend debate. McQuaig urged that regular Canadians recognize that the current trend in politics being advanced under the guise of globalization, remains legitimately debatable.

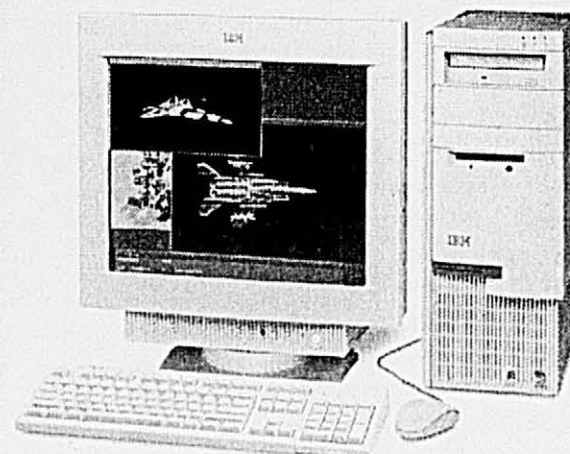
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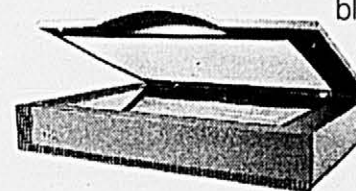


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News Briefs

Nfld's \$4-million scholarship fund to begin in January

By DAVID SKINNER AND
JEANETTE TAYLOR

ST. JOHN'S (CUP) Cash-strapped university students in Newfoundland will be eligible for a new provincial scholarship fund by January. The provincial government announced the \$4-million program last March to bridge the gap between 1999 and 2000, when the federal Millennium Scholarship Fund will kick in. The Newfoundland program will provide 4,000 post-secondary students awards of up to \$1,000 each based on financial need and academic merit.

Tracey O'Reilly, president of the student union and a member of the drafting committee says "There was nothing there for the average student who needs money and we wanted to get away from the idea of it being solely merit based."

Dale Kirby, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Students, says while the fund is a start, larger initiatives are also needed to curb student

debt.

"What we would like to see is a grant program, like the one [the provincial government] eliminated in 1993, that pays a much larger amount of students' fees while they are at university and college," he said.

Controversial education analyst appointed to Millennium Fund

By ANDREW SUNSTRUM

TORONTO (CUP) David Smith, who in 1996 called for deregulation of tuition fees and an income contingent loan repayment plan, was recently appointed senior policy advisor for the Millennium Scholarship Fund. His appointment follows the controversial decision to name Jean Monty Canada's third highest-paid chief executive officer as head of BCE Inc. to oversee the fund.

"He has spoken out on the side of privatization, i.e., downloading a considerable amount of the cost onto the individual," said Elizabeth Carlyle, national chair for the Canadian Federation of Students.

The Millennium Fund, announced last fall by Jean Chretien, is aimed at equipping 100,000 cash-strapped students per year with \$3,000 for school, beginning in the year 2000. The money will dry up ten years later.

Group won't appeal Cambior ruling.

By SONIA VERMA

MONTREAL (CUP) Nearly a month after a Québec judge ruled against them, the group that tried to file a class-action suit on behalf of 23,000 Guyanese against Montréal-based, gold-mining giant Cambior Inc., has announced it will not appeal the decision. The non-profit group can't afford any more legal bills, said Dermot Travis, a spokesman for Recherches Internationales Québec.

The case has already cost the group more than \$30,000, most of which was raised through donations. An appeal would cost another \$15,000, Travis said. Yet he still wants to establish a legal precedent in Canada, and hopes the courts will eventually face a similar case.

SSMU Dental Plan

(continued from front page)

To counter these allegations, Bukman contends that; "dentists can charge whatever they want," but that most follow the fee guide closely. He reminds us that; "dentists are professionals and have professional obligations regardless of financial gain" and cited that those who are on social assistance are assured dental care despite the fact that their government subsidy pays dentists much less than ASEQ does.

Both Dolman and Bukman agree that dentists are not averse to offering discounts to students. Lorenzo Pederzani, SSMU's VP finance and operations feels the QDSA is opposed to the plan because; "dentists are undercutting each other" — some dentists are offering discounts while others are not.

Dolman's other major complaint, that is shared by many McGill students, is how inconvenient and undemocratic the ASEQ opt-out process is. Dolman believes that it should be; "SSMU's responsibility to deal with the student," rather than force them to "opt-out in person at the headquarters of a private company." He calls the current system "undemocratic."

In today's age of technology, McGill students can register by phone, but can not opt-out by using more contemporary methods.

The ASEQ refuses to accept opt-outs by phone, fax, e-mail and even registered mail.

Pederzani admitted the opt-out procedure is an "issue," but he also offers the argument that the status quo is "cheaper." He stated that there have been talks to maybe; "move [the opt-out bureaucracy] on-site;" but in doing so it would create "administrative difficulties" because it would entail moving all the computer data bases on-site also.

The opt-out period this autumn is the slender 10 days between September 23 and October 6. The opt-out period for the winter term is from January 19 until February 1. All opt-outs are processed at the ASEQ offices located at 2045 Stanley, suite 200. In order to opt-out you must provide proof of alternate coverage. Once you opt-out you can not re-enroll in the plan in the same school year.

Pederzani believes that mandatory health and dental coverage for McGill students is a "social choice." The plan is designed so that students who do not have alternate coverage do not opt-out and jeopardize their health for the remainder of the year. He adds that if the majority of students opted-out, the premiums would rise for those remaining in the plan.

Pederzani no longer sees the ASEQ as the insurance brokerage

some do. He praises them for offering an "innovative" plan that "no one else could offer." He presents the argument that the ASEQ is now servicing the plan also. He claims that SSMU could not offer the same quality of customer service that the ASEQ does. Last year alone, they received over 250 000 calls from students inquiring about the plan. Other administrative duties performed by the ASEQ include sorting students into one of the 32 different categories the Quebec government has established for its health care subsidies.

Bukman's doctrine is to make dental care affordable and available to all students since; "it is all about prevention." He asserts that part of the QDSA's mandate "is to increase [dentists'] revenue." He says the Order of Dentistry has the "mandate to govern the profession and they have made no complaint against the ASEQ."

Dolman's position is that a "private corporation can not be expected to objectively evaluate health care needs." He feels they; "have total control over SSMU;" and that money should be; "reinvested back to the students."

Pederzani claims that SSMU is not profiting financially at all from this plan. The SSMU receives "\$60 000 each year for the promotion of the plan... which we do in the Tribune."

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Kosher Sex

with Rabbi Shmuel Boteach

BY LORI BRAUN

Last Wednesday Rabbi Shmuel Boteach gave a talk at the Jewish Cultural Centre in Westmount to promote his new book entitled "Kosher Sex". Rabbi Shmuel Boteach is a well known personality in the U.K. He has appeared numerous times on radio and television including BBC television discussing all sorts of contemporary issues. To his credit he has also written seven books on topics ranging from sexuality to the existence of God.

Those attending the talk were almost entirely elderly, affluent Jewish couples. These couples were clearly enjoying themselves; they chortled at the numerous sharp jokes told by the Rabbi Boteach.

His undeniable charisma and charm legitimized a topic which could potentially be scandalous

and uncomfortable for his audience.

Rabbi Boteach basically discussed the important and fundamental issues in Jewish marriage. He believes that the most crucial element in marriage is the spouse's ability "to focus on his or her partner." We should devote ourselves entirely to our partner so that we can become like one organism "One plus one should equal one."

Rabbi Boteach feels that "marriages are disintegrating because of societal sexual distractions and an

increasing contempt for modesty." Images of sexy women in the media are to be blamed for the fact that a high number of men imagine their wives to be someone else while having sex. He also purports that our lack of modesty is turning sex into a performance art rather than an act of love. Fur-

ther, people who "have sex with the lights on are more concerned and fearful of their performance" than anything else.

He also believes that people who frequently parade around the house naked together are turning their bodies into commonplace objects rather than instruments of

erotica. Sex, according to Rabbi Boteach, should not be about performance and not made ordinary by a lack of modesty but should be an event where the "body peels away..."

Rabbi Boteach's attempt to define marriage was mired in idealism. He did not take into account the reality that many relationships fall apart because of abusive spouses and not because of media distractions. He conveniently avoided the issue of destructive relationships because this simply conflicted with his idea that marriage is forever.

He also fails to discuss or define adequately his concept of undiluted devotion; does this mean that we should sacrifice our individuality in order to better merge as one with our spouse? He negated the place of the individual in the "sacred union of love."

It is also extremely perverse to get love tips from a religious leader. No one should have the power to tell us not to parade around the house naked or not to have sex with the lights on. If this is what turns us on then maybe it was meant to be. In the same way, if getting love tips from a Rabbi turns someone on well then maybe that's O.K., too.

Even though Rabbi Shmuel was hip to many contemporary issues his ideology remained mired in tradition and somewhat inapplicable in a society where the institution of marriage is hardly even considered as an option. His talk would have been more beneficial had he addressed the reality that many relationships have already disintegrated to the point of no return. He ignores this for the sake of expounding somewhat irrelevantly the virtues of true love.



RABBI SHMUEL BOTEACH DISCUSSES KOSHER SEX

PHOTO BY LORI BRAUN

Hearings Into RCMP Actions at APEC Postponed

BY DOUGLAS QUAN

VANCOUVER (CUP) A hearing into the actions of RCMP officers during last year's APEC conference has been postponed for three weeks to give complainants and their lawyers more time to prepare.

"We have concluded it'll be in the best interest that there be a three-week adjournment," Gerald Morin, chair of the RCMP Public Complaints Commission hearings panel, said to a packed room Monday.

A request to have the proceedings adjourned was rejected by the three commission panelists earlier this month. But lawyers for the complainants decided to press the issue again when the British Columbia Federation of Labour announced last Friday it would contribute \$10,000 to a campaign to raise money for the lawyers, who have so far been volunteering their time.

Because there is now an assurance that they will be compensated, lawyers can proceed with helping their clients prepare for the hearings, lawyer Joseph Arvay told the commission Monday. "The bottom line is I have done

nothing to prepare for this inquiry," he said.

His client, Craig Jones, who was arrested during the meeting of 15 Pacific Rim leaders held at the University of British Columbia, said he was pleased with the panel's decision.

"I think we achieved what we wanted to achieve," he said. "We've got an adjournment, we've got funding. There's no point to argue this through the media [any longer]."

Still, some complainants say they're not convinced the inquiry - which they say has been skewed in favour of the RCMP from the start - will be fair, and are threatening to boycott the proceedings.

They say they haven't been given access to crucial documents, nor have they been free to issue direct summons to certain government officials, including the prime minister.

"We think that this is a victory for students, but a qualified victory," said student Garth Mullins, a member of a group of 27 complainants.

But in announcing his decision, Morin stressed the commis-

sion's impartiality. "We are independent citizens and as independent citizens we will give a fair and impartial hearing for all," he said. "We give you our pledge to that."

At least one party in the hearing was not satisfied with Morin's decision to adjourn.

Lawyer James Williams, who is representing RCMP Staff Sgt. Hugh Stewart, says his client wants the hearing to proceed as planned.

Stewart has been unfairly portrayed by the media "without criticism or rebuttal," he said.

"He has been vilified, portrayed as a monster...he wants this hearing to proceed," Williams said.

Stewart was the central figure in a pepper-spraying incident recorded on video during the summit.

Last week, leaked internal documents suggested that high-ranking federal officials, including prime minister Jean Chretien, directed RCMP officers to limit protests during the APEC conference in order to prevent possible embarrassment to then-Indone-

sian president Suharto.

Commission lawyer Chris Considine said he wouldn't rule out calling

Chretien as a witness if it is found that he has relevant evidence to give to the commission.

Considine, who will meet with complainants over the next three weeks to discuss the disclosure of documents, also urged the public not to pass judgment based on the leaked documents.

The hearings are scheduled to resume Oct. 5.

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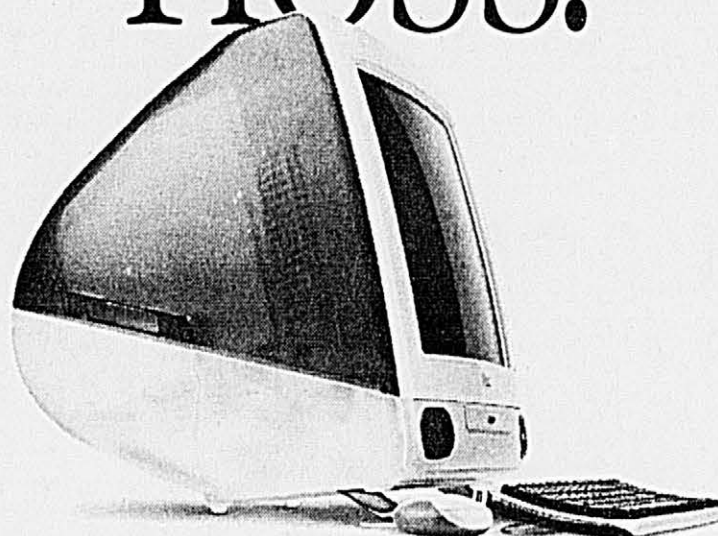
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